

THE DESOTO COUNTY NEWS.

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County Division

DIVISION OF COUNTIES HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO BENEFIT TAX PAYERS.

The Division of Counties is Usually the Result of Rival Political Factions Fighting Each Other. And the Tax Payers are Those Who are Made to Suffer.

Mr. Jordan says that taxes in De Soto county have been gradually increasing ever since the division of Manatee county, when DeSoto county was created. If this is true, then it is the strongest possible reason why DeSoto county should not be divided, for if that division produced a gradual increase in taxes, is it not reasonable to suppose that the division of DeSoto county would produce another increase in taxes? Mr. Jordan nor no other man advocating the division of DeSoto county can show that the division of counties in this state has ever resulted in a reduction of taxes. Mr. Jordan can no doubt show that in some of the smaller counties of the state the rate of taxation (the millage) is lower than it is in DeSoto county, but Mr. Jordan knows that the assessed valuation of the property in these small counties is much higher proportionately than it is in DeSoto county. It is a well-known fact that the valuations placed on the taxable property of DeSoto county is about the lowest of any in the state of Florida, and this means a big saving to the tax payers of the county, for this reason, that when the property is assessed high, and the rate of taxation is made low, each tax payer pays to the state a larger amount of tax than he would pay if the valuation of his property was made low, and the rate of taxation high. In DeSoto county the assessed valuation of the property is low and the rate of taxation is higher than it is in some of the other counties of the state, therefore, in DeSoto county, less than one-third of the total taxes paid by each tax payer goes to the state, while in Pasco, Citrus, Lake and some of the other small counties about fifty per cent, or one-half of the amount of taxes of each tax payer goes to the state. In these small counties the condition is reversed from what it is in DeSoto, for in them the rate of taxation is comparatively low, while the valuation on similar classes of property is about four times as high as it is in DeSoto county.

You cannot buy the property of DeSoto county for four times as much as it is assessed for, yet it is an absolute fact that in many of the smaller counties of the state you cannot sell the property for what it is assessed at. If DeSoto county would assess her property as high as the property is assessed in the smaller counties of the state, she could reduce her rate of taxation to one-half what it is now, and collect as much taxes as she now collects. Mr. Jordan once lived in Sumpter county in this state, and while there he fought the division of that county to a cold finish. He probably opposed the division of that county for the reason that he was not asked to go to the legislature to divide it. Sumpter county was divided. Mr. Jordan left there, and came to one of the largest (DeSoto) counties in the state, believing, no doubt, that he could do better in a large county than he could in a small one. Mr. Jordan, in coming to DeSoto county after fighting the division of Sumpter county, showed his preference for large counties, for if he is so partial to small counties and believes so strongly in them, why did he not stay in the small counties in which he lived before he came to DeSoto? I know a man living in DeSoto county who owns some wild or unimproved land in Sumpter county—where Mr. Jordan once lived—and this land is assessed at \$4.00 per acre, the owner has offered to sell it for \$1.00 per acre and cannot sell it.

Mr. Jordan is almost as changeable in his views and ideas on the division of counties as his newly acquired supporter, Mr. Hugh Sparkman, who a few weeks ago was a candidate for representative of DeSoto county, and was running on a platform that most bitterly opposed the division of the

county and now, a few weeks later, we find him flopped completely over and supporting his former opponent, Mr. Jordan, who was brought out and nominated and is running on a platform, the sole purpose of which is to divide DeSoto county—the thing which Hugh, a few weeks ago, thought was an outrage and an imposition on every tax payer and citizen of the county. Why did Hugh change so suddenly, from one side to the other? Some people will guess, others do not have to. Mr. Jordan left the small counties in which he lived and came to DeSoto, and since by doing this he has shown his dislike for small counties we have no assurance that he would remain here if this county should be split into three small strips as Mr. Jordan proposes doing. Mr. Jordan has not done one-tenth as much toward building up DeSoto county as have the tax payers whom he asks to support him in his efforts to tear it up and ruin it. Do you know that every time Mr. Jordan travels up and down this railroad to see you to ask you to vote for him, that he may divide DeSoto county, that he rides on a pass that is furnished him by the railroad that does business in this county? The same is true of Mr. Hugh Sparkman. This looks like they are on pretty good terms with this gigantic corporation, does it not? They may claim that they pay for their passes in advertising, but they would get the passes even if they did not print a time table for the railroad company. Men who ride on passes are usually under obligations to whoever gives them the pass. The railroad companies always want the newspapers on their side, they feel like they need them. When Bill Hooker goes out to see the voters he has to pay his way on the train. Mr. Sparkman intimates that he is not favoring division of the county in supporting Mr. Jordan, who is bound and pledged if elected, to divide this county, he was brought out for that purpose and for no other, that is what he is running for, and in voting for and in supporting him, Mr. Sparkman votes for and supports the scheme to divide the county. If, as Hugh said, when he was a candidate, it would be outrageous to divide the county, would it not be just as wrong to divide it since he is not a candidate? His changing so suddenly does not change the merits or demerits of the issue. Why did Hugh change so suddenly? I admit that a sudden change of mind is sometimes worth something to the individual so changing.

Most of the citizens of this county will remember the confusion and tangle of land deeds that followed the division of Manatee county, and that division cost the land owners of this county thousands of dollars to get their land deeds straight after the records had been transcribed, and many of them are not yet straight and probably will never be. If the taxpayers of the county want to save themselves a whole lot of confusion, tangle of land deeds, trouble, and a big increase in taxes, they had best kill this scheme to tear up the county and put it in the condition that the small counties are in, that Mr. Jordan recently moved from.

N. M. Sauls.

A DOZEN DON'T'S.

Don't sit around waiting for the world to pay you the living it owes you.

Don't waste on the family dog the caresses that your children are pining for.

Don't forget that you were once young.

Don't anger a man by always talking about your smart children when he wants to talk a little about his own.

Don't bother a busy man unless you have business worth while.

Don't leave your cheerful smiles at the office when your day's work is done.

Don't say a word if you can not speak good of your neighbor.

Don't bore your friends by falling into the foolish habit of always giving advice.

Don't try to drown sorrow. It is the greatest floater known.

Don't forget that your cynicism may appear to your friends to be a cloak for ignorance.

Don't judge a man by results, but by efforts.

Don't give advice that you do not follow.—Ex.

To the Voters of DeSoto County

I wish to thank you most heartily, for the confidence manifested and the support tendered me in the primary held on May the 15th, and I wish now to thank you in advance for any support you may render me in the primary to be held on the 12th of June next.

To those voters and tax-payers who are opposed to the division of DeSoto county, and who so manifested their opposition by voting for Judge Cochran, I wish to say that Judge Cochran is my friend and neighbor, and had he ran ahead of me in the primary which was held on the 15th of May, he would not have had a more loyal supporter in the second primary than myself, and my friends and supporters would have supported him to a man. I heartily accord to every voter the absolute privilege of voting as his conscience, reason and better judgement may dictate; I therefore wish to say to those voters who voted against me in the recent primary that I bear you no malice whatever.

I was born and reared in DeSoto county, and my entire interest is here, and to those citizens and voters of the county who do not know me personally, I wish to say that I would like for you to investigate my past life and ascertain whether or not there is anything in it that renders me unworthy of your support and confidence. If I should be elected to the legislature—and I expect to be—my efforts at all times will be to support such legislation as will be to the interest of the state, and to the interest of DeSoto county especially. Upon the various issues of this campaign I believe I have already stated my position, but I again wish to say that I am unalterably opposed to the division of DeSoto county for the reason that I believe that division would prove detrimental to every interest of the county and a hardship upon every tax-payer of the county, and especially do I believe it would be most seriously injurious to the schools of the county. I favor the repeal of the Everglades Drainage law because it is a useless waste of the state's money, because it imposes useless hardships upon the tax-payers of the state, and because it imposes a tax of \$2.00 a year on each forty acres of land owned by a few of the tax-payers of DeSoto county, a tax which amounts to nothing less than the confiscation of their property. I am opposed to the repeal of the Buckman Educational law because of the great good it will be to the school interest of the state. I favor any legislation that will establish a uniform system of school text books for the state and that will relieve the people of the abuses of the school book trust. I am opposed to further contributions by the state to the Tampa Fair Association. Upon the question of the sale of intoxicating liquors I wish to say that in every wet and dry election that has been held in DeSoto county, I have voted against the sale of whiskey and I shall do likewise in the next election that may be held and if such legislation can be enacted as will prohibit the sale of it in the entire state of Florida, I will heartily support such legislation.

Upon the minor issues of the campaign you already know my position. My opponent, Mr. Jordan, was nominated and is running solely upon an issue to divide DeSoto county; he would not have been a candidate in this campaign had it not been that he was nominated by a few men in Punta Gorda and Wauchula for the specific purpose of dividing the county.

Read Mr. Jordan's announcement of his nomination and candidacy if you want to know the issue upon which he is running. Mr. Jordan said in his speech at Bowling Green that a vote cast for him was a vote cast for division of DeSoto county. Fully fifty of the citizens of Bowling Green heard him say this, and yet he and a few of his supporters are trying to deceive the people into believing that this is not the main issue upon which Mr. Jordan is running.

My position upon the much-talked-of pasture land question of which my opponents have sought to make much capital against me is substantially this: First I wish to say that I know

absolutely nothing about this matter until it was brought out in this campaign. Second, I wish to say that I do not own and have never owned an acre of land upon which I have not paid taxes. Should I be blamed because a few individuals and a few land companies owning land in DeSoto county do not pay their taxes and allow their lands to be sold for taxes? Can I prevent this? Have I the power to prevent it? Has any other citizen, or have all the citizens of DeSoto county the power to prevent it? They have not the power.

I am informed that the condition of this pasture land of which you have heard so much is this: That formerly it was owned by land companies who for many years considered it worthless and would not pay the taxes assessed against it, therefore for many years it was sold for nonpayment of the taxes assessed against it; in fact, it was sold so many times that the taxes and cost which accumulated against it amounted to a great deal more than the land was worth or could be sold for. A few years ago some of the cattle men began buying pasture lands on the open range, this forced others to buy in self defence, and it was then that these lands against which the unpaid taxes had accumulated for years was sold and was sold in the following manner: viz: the companies which had allowed it to be sold for taxes made a quit claim deed to the cattle men, and the state holds tax deeds to it for the back or unpaid taxes for which it was sold. I favor the collection of all the taxes assessed against this land in the same manner and upon the same basis that the taxes are collected against the smaller tax payer who owns only 40, 80, or a 100 acres of land; law and justice demands this and I am in favor of enforcing the law in such matters to the fullest extent. I believe the man who owns ten thousand or a hundred thousand acres of land is as able to pay his taxes and would agree to keep them ten or forty acres, and I believe that every man and every tax payer should stand equal before the law, and I am in favor of so amending the tax laws that where those large land companies and large individual land owners will not pay their tax, that a tax deed against their lands and against all other lands upon which the taxes are not paid shall be as effective as a warranty deed.

Heretofore many of the large land companies and some of the cattle men have allowed their land to be sold for taxes for several years, they would then go before the Board of County Commissioners and agree to pay up the taxes and would agree to keep them paid up thereafter, provided the commissioners would allow them to redeem the land at a big reduction in the taxes, and in many instances the commissioners deeming it a wise policy to do so would allow them the reduction, the owner would redeem it at the reduction and would the next year allow the land to be sold for taxes. I am opposed to any such concessions by the county commissioners or any other officials, and am in favor of amending the law to prevent it. Such concessions are an injustice to every tax-payer in the county and I am in favor of any legislation that will prevent it and that will compel every tax-payer to pay his just proportion of the taxes. I solicit your support and suffrage in the approaching primary, and promise you that if elected to the legislature it will be my most earnest effort as a member of that body to make every act of mine a benefit to the entire citizenship of DeSoto county.

Respectfully yours,

W. H. Hooker.

BIG ORANGE GROVE DEAL.

Papers conveying one undivided half interest in the famous Nocatee grove, have been filed in the clerk's office. The purchasers are W. G. and R. F. Welles. Consideration one dollar. It is not known by us what the purchase price was, but it is generally believed that they paid fifty thousand dollars for their interests.

NATHAN DANIELS KILLED BY WOMAN.

On Sunday night the 27th, at Hull, a negro woman named Mamie Youmans stabbed Nathan Daniels, a negro man, with a knife which wound resulted in his death, Monday at this place. The murderer was placed in jail to await trial at the next term of the circuit court.

Ring or Anti-Ring

It is now in the hands of the voters to say whether it is ring or anti-ring rule in the territory now DeSoto County. Notwithstanding the fact that the people have spoken in unmistakable terms on the division question being nearly two to one against division, still Editor Jordan clings to his division plank. If he is elected, and he succeeds in dividing the county contrary to the expressed will of the people, we will see Rings in absolute control of the three respective counties.

Punta Gorda has now more than one hundred majority over her whole county, Arcadia nearly two hundred and Wauchula at her present rate of growth will equal all of the rest of her county. What are you going to do about it? Will you sit at home and allow the opportunity to pass, or will you come out and vote and work for the anti-division candidates, and thus leave it in our hands to control rings and ring politics.

Think it over; and do not let personal animosity lead you into a mistake by which you will place it beyond your power to control the politics of the county.

Billy Hooker is neither politician nor trickster, no man can accuse him of being dishonest, we know him and know him well, and statements as to what he did or said should be taken as colored by the glamor of partisan politics.

Consider well the above phase of the case, and remember that when all is said about wrong assessments and etc., that it is election times, and that you have a county commissioner from your district in whose hands the matter of assessment lies, and you can demand of him that inequalities shall not exist.

Remember that to stay away from the polls is not the right way to face an issue and if you see two evils choose the lesser.

THE WALKES CLAIM.

It is probable, in fact, it is claimed by some of the "knowing ones" as a sure thing, that the dreaded Walkes claim, which like Bane's ghost will not down, will trouble the legislative waters of the next Florida general assembly. Some who have made a careful study of the personnel of the next law making body to sit in Florida say that it will not only be up for consideration but that the claim will be favorably considered.

While we do not apprehend that there is any danger of such a measure being passed by the legislature, it would be well enough for the people of Florida who are of the opinion that this Walkes claim is both unreasonable and unjust to keep their eyes open. A little agitation of the Walkes claim might be of service in putting some of the newly elected legislators "next" on this most important matter.—Plant City Courier.

When the agitation begins, we have some data to give the people of DeSoto county, that they do not know, and will open the eyes of those who have been championing the Walkes cause.

REV. JOSEPH LEMUEL DURANCE.

Our community was saddened last week when the report was circulated that the above named man was dead. He had been a minister in the Methodist and Baptist churches respectively, for about twenty years, and at the age of forty-six, while in the prime of life, and in the midst of a useful career, the Lord called him up higher.

Our God honors those who honor him, and the good man dies well.

Your reporter was informed that this brother died of nervous prostration in the New Hope settlement near Zolfo.

The interment took place last Friday in the old family burying ground at Pisgah, two miles from Bowling Green. Rev. E. J. Hardee, pastor of the Methodist church at Wauchula, assisted by Rev. Hancock, of Fort Meade, officiating.

Deceased leaves a devoted wife, five sons, four daughters, two grandchildren, and a host of friends to mourn his departure.

CITIZENS OF ARCIDA WANT TO KNOW.

The City Council of Arcadia at its call meeting on Wednesday night, rejected the proposition of the Electric Light Co. to pump the city supply of water, such action should require some explanation, in as much as the mass meeting of citizens held recently on call of Mayor, voted almost unanimously a resolution, recommending to the City Council that they make the contract.

By this act the Council compels the Trustees to put up a boiler house and boiler and this necessitates the recalling of contract for four inch mains that was to supply the new school building and that part of town adjacent. The council had the estimate of the city engineer in their hands showing that the city would save enough in two years by making the contract to put in this boiler and boiler-house out of the profits, the city under the contract has the right to discontinue the contract on six months' notice, and could thereby have availed themselves of the opportunity of having their supply pumped at a profit during the years of small consumption, whereas it is an absolute impossibility for them to make anything out of the water-works for years pumping the water themselves.

A POWERFUL CHURCH.

Few people have a conception of the Baptist church in this county. It is today one of the strongest religious denominations in existence. At the recent Baptist convention of the Southern church, held at Chattanooga, fifteen states and territories were represented by 14,652 duly appointed delegates, who were present. The territory represented was one million square miles. The population of this area is 30,000,000, of which 1,900,000 are Baptists. Since 1845 the population of this territory has increased from 8,000,000 to 30,000,000, and the believers of the Baptist faith have increased from 250,000 to 1,900,000. The Baptists now have \$25,000,000 worth of property, \$10,000,000 in an educational plant and \$5,000,000 in foreign missionary work, making a total of \$40,000,000, all of which was raised by the South in its poverty.

The South is rapidly coming to the front, however, and the Baptists in this section say that better things can be expected of the future.

There are 4,000,000 Baptists in the United States, and 6,000,000 in the world.

This is a magnificent showing, and demonstrates that the Baptists are a mighty factor in the work of Christianizing the people.—The Metropolis.

WHEN.

The people will get a fair share of their toll.

When protection's no longer a graft, The farmers will profit from tilling the soil.

When protection's no longer a graft, The trusts will walk straight and have to tote fair.

The Standard Oil stock have less moisture per share.

And lawmakers will have a good chance to act fair.

When protection's no longer a graft,

The men who produce will have a good chance.

When protection's no longer a graft, There'll be fewer schemes of the higher finance.

When protection's no longer a graft, There will be fewer steals under guise of the law.

Coal barons and such will be forced up to taw.

When protection's no longer a graft,

Good laws then our congress can quickly enact.

When protection's no longer a graft, Committees by selfish men can not be packed.

When protection's no longer a graft, Every man will be given a fair start in the race,

Nobody be shoved into third or fourth place.

And merit, not boodle, will settle each case.

When protection's no longer a graft. —Exchange.

COUNTY JUDGE'S COURT.

The following two cases have been disposed of this week in the County Judge's Court:

Phil Howard (Col.), selling whiskey, bound over to circuit court.

Leroy Sneads, carrying pistol not concealed, without permission, plead guilty, fined \$25.00 and cost.